

# trans 101

**Serving TGO (Transgender, GenderQueer, Gender  
Non-Conforming) Students/ Creating Inclusive  
Campuses for Faculty & Staff**

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## Pronouns

Pronouns are words that substitute for nouns. Most people have certain pronouns\* that they expect other people to use for them. Most of you—those of you who are cisgender (or cis)—have likely never given your pronouns a second thought. You use the traditional pronouns (she/her/hers or he/him/his) that were assigned to you at birth. But, some of you—GenderQueer and Trans\* folks, for example—*have* thought about it. Some have found that their assigned pronouns don't fit quite right. Many of these individuals have found that the other traditional pronoun was a better fit, some have found (or even generated) non-binary pronouns, and others use pronouns interchangeably.



	Nominative (Subject)	Objective (Object)	Possessive Adjective	Possessive Pronoun	Reflexive
<b>Traditional Pronouns (Binary)</b>					
<b>She</b>	She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself
<b>He</b>	He	Him	His	His	Himself
<b>Gender Neutral Pronouns (Non-Binary)</b>					
<b>Ze*</b>	Ze	Hir	Hir	Hirs	Hirself
<b>They*</b>	They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themself
<b>Si</b>	Si	Sir	Sir	Sirs	Sirself
<b>Ey</b>	Ey	Em	Eir	Eirs	Ey

*\*Some people call these pronouns "preferred gender pronouns" or "PGPs." But, many members of the Trans\* community reject the term "preferred" and ask that we refer to pronouns as just pronouns.*

Having people automatically use the pronouns with which you identify is a part of having cisgender privilege. Using the pronouns that someone asks you to use is a powerful way to be an ally to the Trans\* community. This guide will give you some simple better practices for inclusive and respectful pronoun usage.

### Pronoun Quick Tips:

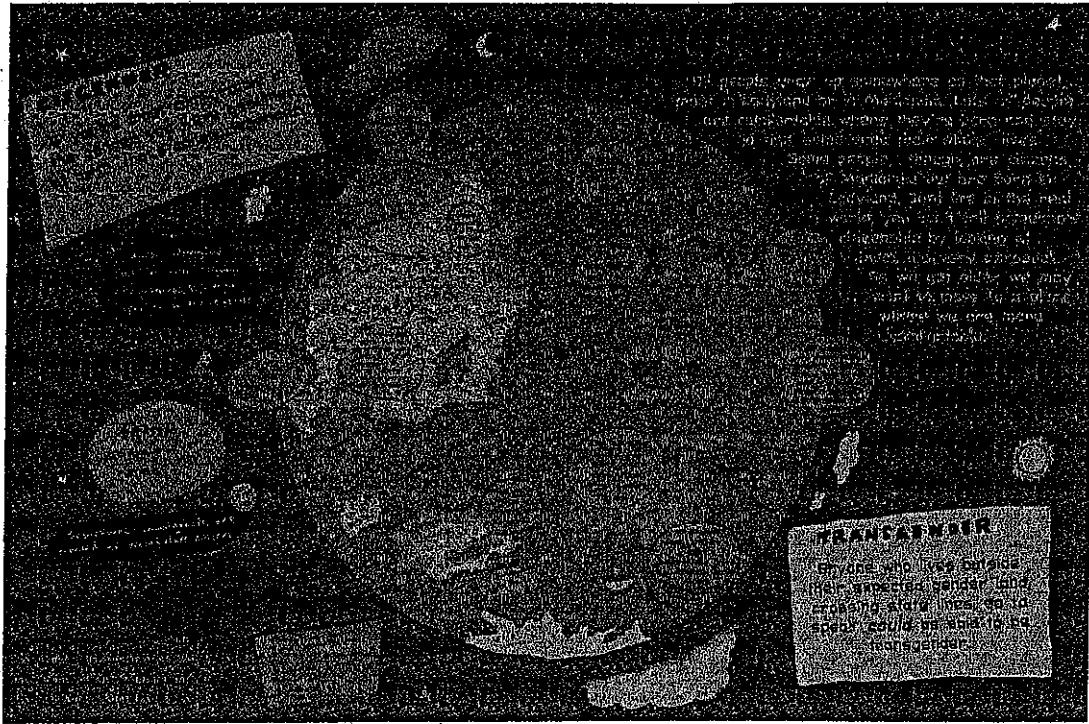
- Use the pronouns that a person asks you to use.
- If you don't know someone's pronouns, ask (politely). You might be surprised.
- Don't just ask people who appear to be "ambiguously gendered."
- Share your pronouns when appropriate (even if you are cisgender).
- If you use the wrong pronouns for someone, apologize and use the ones they ask you to use.

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# Understanding Gender

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<u>Sex</u>	<u>Gender</u>

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## Sex, Sexuality, and Gender Spectrums

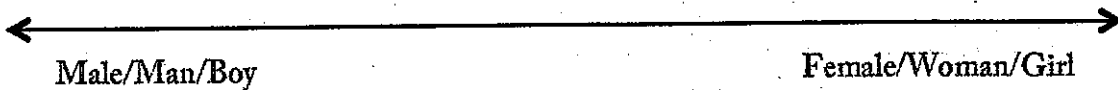
Developed by Shane O. Whalley

Please map your gender and sexuality out on this page.

<u>Birth Assigned Sex</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female

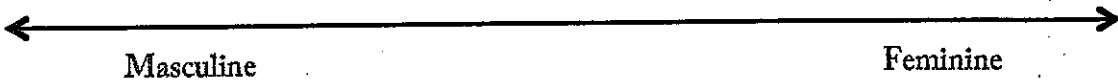
### Gender Identity

*A person's innate sense of gender: being a woman, a man, in between, or something else.*



### Gender Expression

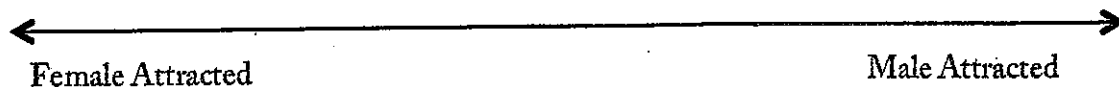
*A person's presentation of their own gender: masculinity, femininity, or something else. This can include clothing, voice, or mannerisms.*



*A place for you to draw your gender identity/expression if it doesn't indeed fit into the spectrum. Suggestions might be a pretzel, a 3-D graph, or anything that works for you.*

### Sexual Orientation

*A person's identity in terms of their sexual and emotional attractions, not necessarily dependent on their behavior.*



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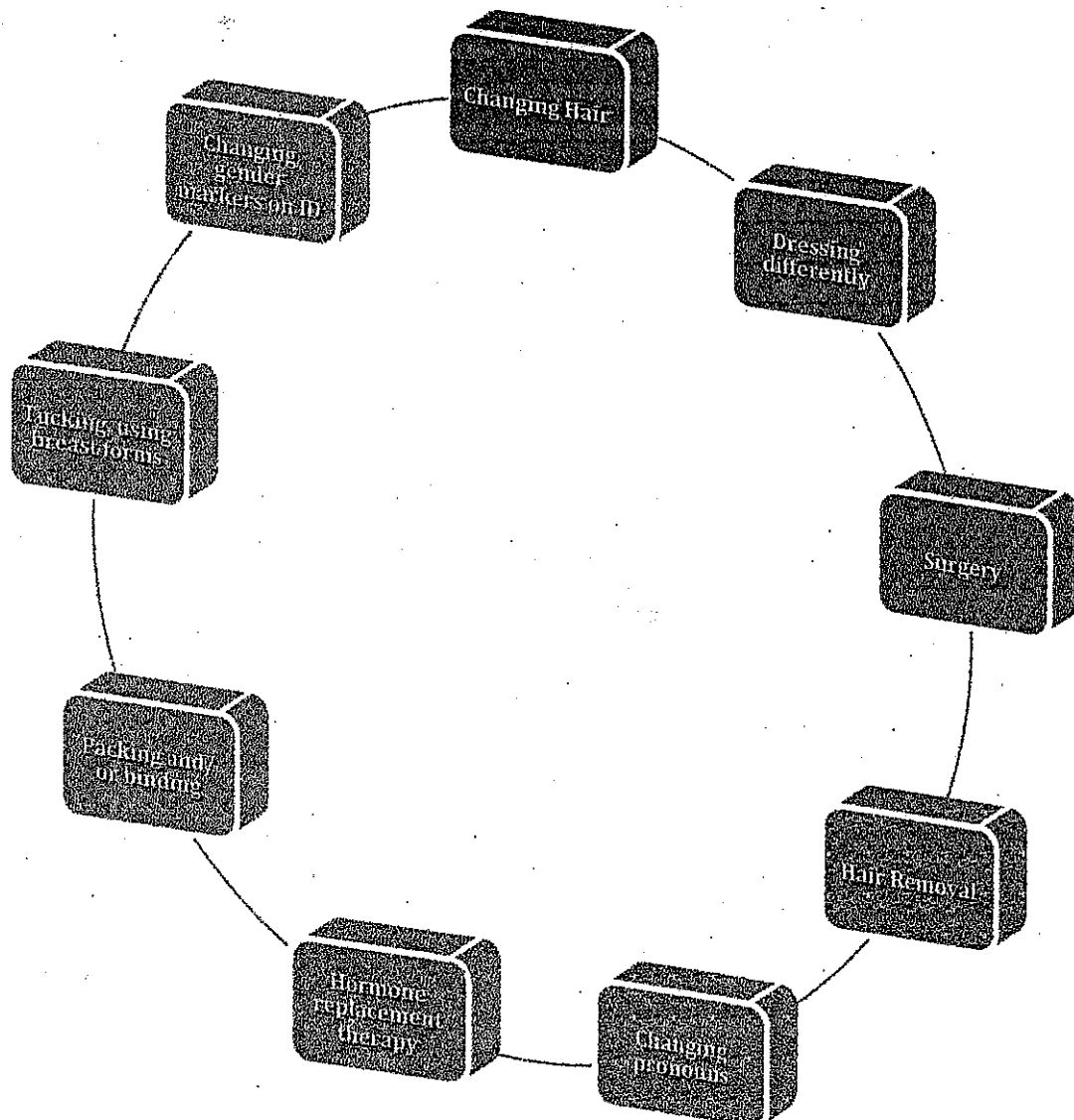
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## Transitioning 101

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There is no right or wrong way to transition. There is no simple path for transitioning. There is no single definition of what it means to transition. A Trans\* person may do any combination of the following things in their process of transitioning. Others, play in the gray and live in the transition (read: ambiguity or queerness). All roads lead to awesome—let's make more space for each of to be our true selves!

That is not to say that transitioning doesn't have costs—literal financial costs, emotional costs, and more. Be supportive of your Trans\* community at all stages of their transition.



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## Cisgender Privilege Checklist

*Please complete as you are willing and able. Note that some of these privileges will be complicated by other oppressive forces you might face (like racism, classism, ableism, or sexism).*

- I can use the bathroom that aligns with my gender identity without the fear of ridicule or violence—I don't have to "hold it" until I can find a gender-neutral bathroom.
- In most states I do not fear being evicted or fired because of my gender identity and expression.
- I expect that state non-discrimination laws apply to me.
- I am confident that people will use the correct pronouns for me.
- My government issue IDs (driver's license, birth certificate, passport) accurately reflect who I am.
- My doctor understands my unique medical concerns.
- If arrested or institutionalized I do not have to worry about being housed with in the wrong section if the facility is segregated by sex.
- I can get access to the health care I need—including reproductive health-care—without being ridiculed, denied services, or treated unfairly.
- My insurance will cover necessary procedures.
- I can access sex-segregated services like homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, gyms, hostels, and dorms.
- I do not fear violence when a potential lover discovers my genitals.
- People rarely ask me about my genitals.
- It is unlikely that I would risk my health by avoiding the medical profession for fear of discovery.
- I do not have to conceal or enhance parts of my body through binding, tucking, make-up, or stuffing in order to express my authentic gender.
- I can procreate—I am likely able to impregnate my partner or I am likely to conceive and bear children.
- I am more likely to achieve orgasm.
- I will likely have \$50,000 or more to spend or save for retirement.
- I do not have to spend thousands of dollars to have a therapist confirm my gender and allow me to transition if I wish.
- My family accepts my gender completely.
- My family has always accepted my gender completely.
- As a cisgender person I am less likely to commit suicide than a transgender person.
- At my funeral I will be presented as the gender I identify with.
- I never worry about passing gender wise. I am oblivious to the consequences of someone failing to do so, and consequently losing my cisgender privilege.
- I have a reasonable expectation of privacy when it comes to my body.
- Bodies like mine are represented in film and in the media without being considered obscene, freakish, or deviant.
- Identities like mine are represented in film and in the media fairly.
- Identities like mine are represented in film and TV without being the victims of violence.
- My gender is acknowledged universally, immediately, and without hesitation.

*Developed by Jesse Beal, 2011. Developed from the Queer United Cisgender Check-List.*

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## Trans\* Vocabulary – Key Terms

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*“Language is a tailor’s shop where nothing quite fits” – Rumi*

Queer vocabulary is ever changing—across time, generation, culture, region, and identity group. These are not the “right” definitions, but these definitions reflect the current consensus within the community. This is a list of carefully researched and thoughtfully discussed definitions. It is by no means a comprehensive list, but it is a place for us to start. As with all language, these words do not capture the full experience of living and breathing Trans\* people. Remember: mirror the language people use for themselves.

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**Agender:** someone who does not identify as a gendered being. Usually this means that they do not identify as male or female, or even on the trans\* spectrum. They might be considered gender-neutral.

**Androgynous:** a person who has a combination of both male and female gendered qualities or few gendered qualities. The blending of these traits means that the person’s gender might be considered ambiguous.

**Bigender:** a person who identifies as both male and female.

**Birth Assigned Sex** – the designation that refers to a person’s biological, morphological, hormonal, and genetic composition. One’s sex is typically assigned at birth and classified as either male or female.

**Cisgender** – individuals whose gender identity and expression line up with their birth-assigned sex.

**Cisgender Privilege** – a group of unearned cultural, legal, social and institutional privileges and rights extended to cisgender people. Cisgender people are considered the normative group leaving other constructs of gender unnatural, deviant or just plain wrong. These privileges are automatic and most individuals in the privileged class are unaware of them. Transgender people can access this privilege by remaining in the closet or “passing.” Similar to heterosexual, white, male, and class privileges.

**Cissexism** – the belief that cisgender individuals are the privileged class and are more natural, normal, and acceptable than Transgender, GenderQueer, or Gender Non-Conforming people. This belief manifests as the systemic denial of rights to Trans\* people and their routine mistreatment.

**Coming Out** – the process by which LGBTI individuals recognize, accept, typically appreciate, and often celebrate their sexual orientation, sexuality, or gender identity/expression. Coming out varies across culture and community.

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## Trans \* Vocabulary – Key Terms

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**Cross-dresser:** a person who, regardless of motivation, wears clothes, makeup, etc. that are considered by the culture to be appropriate for another gender (usually conceptualized as the “opposite” gender), but not one’s own (preferred term to “transvestite”). Some people feel that it is most appropriate to say “someone who cross-dresses,” implying that cross-dressing is less of an identity and more of an activity.

**Drag King or Drag Queen:** a person who employs gender-marked clothing, make-up, and mannerisms for their own and other people’s appreciation or for entertainment. Or, a performer who performs gender as a medium for the examination and the deconstruction of gender, as well as entertainment and education. Not all drag performers are LGBTQ identified and not all gender performance involves performing a gender different from the gender you identify with.

**FTM or F-to-M:** a female-to-male transsexual, or a trans man. Some transsexuals reject this term, arguing that they have always been male and are only making that identity visible. Others feel that such language reinforces an either/or gender construct. Certain individuals will instead identify as FTX, XIX, or XTM.

**Gender** – Socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society deems masculine or feminine. This social construct is often linked to and confused with the biological construct of sex.

**Gender Binary** – a social construction of gender in which there are two distinct and opposite genders: male/masculine/men and female/feminine/women.

**Gender Dysphoria** – a medical diagnosis defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), the American Psychiatric Association’s encyclopedia of diagnoses, as “[T]he distress that may accompany the incongruence between one’s experienced or expressed gender and one’s assigned gender.” This was formerly known as Gender Identity Disorder.

**Gender Expression** – a person’s presentation of their gender. These outward expressions of gender can be intentional or unintentional and involve one’s mannerisms, clothing, hair, speech, clothing, and activities (and more!).

**Gender Identity** – a person’s innate sense of their own gender: being a man, a woman, a girl, a boy, in between, or outside of the gender binary.

**Gender Non-Conforming:** person that challenges the gender binary by identifying or performing their gender outside in a way that does not conform to dominant constructions of masculinity and femininity.

**GenderQueer** – an identity term for a person who may not identify with and/or express themselves within the gender binary.

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## Trans \* Vocabulary – Key Terms

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**Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS):** Surgical procedures that change one's body to conform to one's gender identity. These procedures may include "top surgery" (breast augmentation or removal) and "bottom surgery" (altering genitals). For female-to-male transsexuals, GRS involves a bilateral mastectomy (chest reconstruction), panhysterectomy (removal of the ovaries and uterus), and sometimes a phalloplasty (construction of a penis) and scrotoplasty (formation of a scrotum) or a metoidioplasty (restructuring the clitoris). For male-to-female transsexuals, GRS consists of optional surgical breast implants and vaginoplasty (construction of a vagina). Additional surgeries might include a trachea shave (reducing the size of the Adam's apple), bone restructuring to feminize facial features, and hair transplants. Sometimes GRS is referred to as "gender confirming surgery" or "gender affirmation surgery" to recognize that one's gender does not change—it is only being made visible to others.

**Gender Spectrum:** a way to think about gender diversity outside of the gender binary or gender boxes. Gender can be thought of as a spectrum of possible gendered identities. This approach isn't all encompassing and is problematic for genderqueer and agender individuals.

**Hijra:** an Urdu term used in South Asia, specifically in India, for birth-assigned male individuals who identify as female and express their gender in a feminine way.

**Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT):** a hormone therapy sometimes given to transsexual, transgender, and intersex individuals to alter the hormonal composition of the body. The primary goal is the development of secondary sex characteristics. This type of therapy often results in more desirable results for trans\* men than trans\* women. HRT does not undo puberty and some people will choose to undergo a gender-reassignment surgery.

**Intergender:** a gender blender who combines genders. Similar to bigender.

**Intersex** – A person whose genitals, secondary sex characteristics, chromosomes, and/or hormone levels do not fit into the medical/societal definition of male or female. This is the preferred term to hermaphrodite.

**MTF or M-to-F:** a male-to-female transsexual, or a trans woman. Some transsexuals reject this term, arguing that they have always been female and are only making that identity visible. Others feel that such language reinforces an either/or gender construct. Certain individuals will instead identify as MTX, XTX, or XTF.

**Passing:** the conscious effort to perform one's gender in a manner that conforms to dominant constructions of gender. Passing means that one is "read" as the gender that they identify with. Passing is a goal for many trans\* individuals, but not all.

**Transitioning:** the period during which a person begins to live as their gender identity. It may include changing one's name, taking hormones, having surgery, and altering legal documents. Transitioning means very different things to different people.

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## Trans\* Vocabulary – Key Terms

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**Transphobia** – the fear, hatred, and intolerance of people who identify or are perceived to be Transgender, GenderQueer, or Gender Non-Conforming. Racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression intersect and complicate transphobia.

**Queer** – a term for individuals whose gender identity/expression and/or sexual orientation does not conform to societal norms. This reclaimed term is increasingly being used as an inclusive umbrella term for the LGBTQIA community.

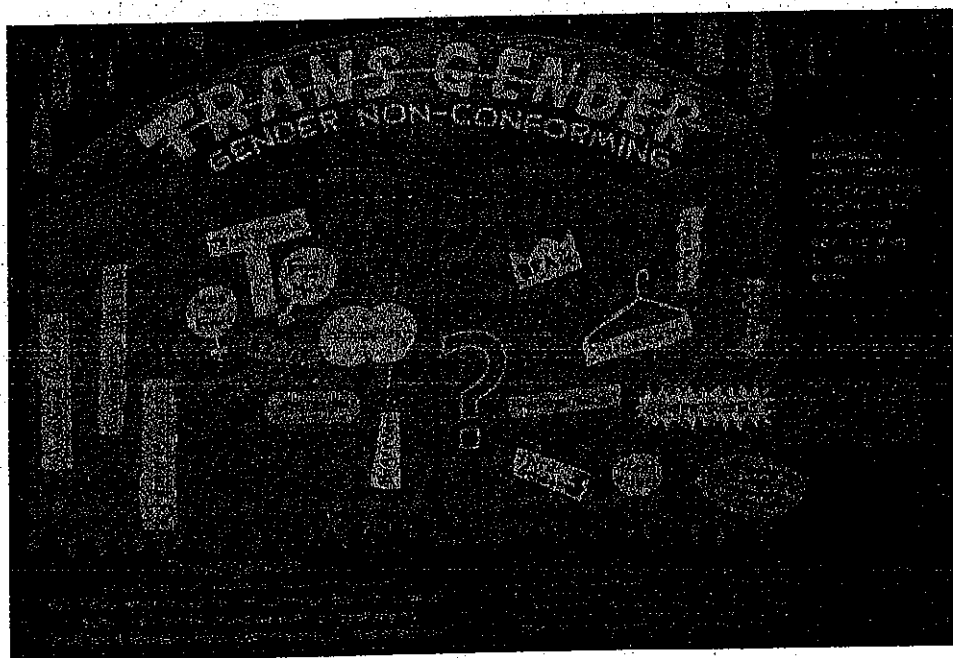
**Transsexual** – people who change their presentation to express their gender identity. Examples of these **transitions** might include: changing one's name, pronouns, hair, or manner of dress, and medical transitions, like gender affirmation surgery, hormone replacement therapy.

**Transgender or trans\***: is an umbrella term for people who do not identify with their assigned birth sex and/or whose gender expressions do not conform to societal expectations. Trans\* encompasses many different gender identities and expressions. Many people who do not identify as trans\* but still face discrimination due to a real or perceived gender transgression. This is the preferred term to “transvestite” or “tranny.”

**Two Spirit**: A Native American/First Nation term for people who blend the masculine and the feminine. This term is now used by some LGBT Native American, Indigenous, and First Nation people to identify themselves. The preferred term to “berdache.”

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*Please note that there are important terms missing from this list. If you would like a copy of Jesse's more complete vocabulary list, please contact her and ze will email you the PDF. If your identity is missing from this list, ze apologizes*



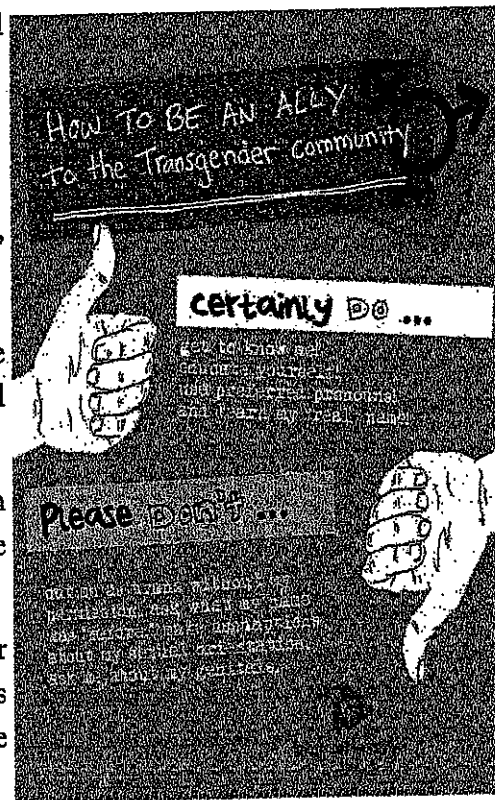
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## Better Practices for Trans\* Allies ~ A Place to Start

- Educate yourself.
- Support initiatives for gender-neutral/inclusive housing and bathrooms—it is a matter of safety and quality of life.
- Don't assume that if someone falls under the transgender spectrum that they want to undergo surgery or will be taking hormones. Transitioning can mean different things for different people.
- If you don't know what pronouns to use, ask (politely). You can start asking everyone new you meet—trans or cis.
- Maintain confidentiality. Some trans folks are stealth (no one knows they are transgender), some are out everywhere, and others are out some places, but not others.
- Mirror the language people use for themselves.
- Do not ask about genitals.
- Do not ask what someone's name was "before" their transition.
- Never assume that being transgender is the same as being gay, lesbian, or bisexual. There are real and important differences.
- Do not assume someone's sexual orientation based upon the fact the fact that they are transgender.
- Trust that transgender, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming people know which bathrooms they have entered AND that this is the appropriate bathroom for them.
- Listen to and respect Trans voices.
- Work for Transgender inclusion.
- **STOP** policing other people's genders!



This graphic is from *The Gender Book* by Mel Reiff Hill and Jay Mays. For more information on *The Gender Book*, you can visit [thegenderbook.com](http://thegenderbook.com). Check out this awesome project!

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